

Dresden Edition

THE WORKS

OF

Robert G. Ingersoll

"EVERY BRAIN IS A FIELD WHERE NATURE SOWS
THE SEEDS OF THOUGHT, AND THE CROP DEPENDS UPON
THE SOIL."

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME VII.

DISCUSSIONS

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A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.*

CHAPTER I.

THE good part of Christmas is not always Christian—it is generally Pagan ; that is to say, human, natural.

Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips. It meant war on earth and perdition hereafter.

It taught some good things—the beauty of love and kindness in man. But as a torch-bearer, as a bringer of joy, it has been a failure. It has given infinite consequences to the acts of finite beings, crushing the soul with a responsibility too great for mortals to bear. It has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men. Not satisfied with that, it has deprived God of the pardoning power.

* This is the famous Christmas Sermon written by Colonel Ingersoll and printed in the *Evening Telegram*, on December 19, 1891.

In answer to this "Christmas Sermon," the Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, the recognized organ of the Methodist Church, wrote an article, calling upon the public to boycott the *Evening Telegram* for publishing such a "sermon."

This attack was headed "Lies That Are Mountainous." The *Telegram* promptly accepted the issue raised by Dr. Buckley and dared him to do his utmost. On the very same day it published an answer from Colonel Ingersoll that echoed throughout America.

And yet it may have done some good by borrowing from the Pagan world the old festival called Christmas.

Long before Christ was born the Sun-God triumphed over the powers of Darkness. About the time that we call Christmas the days begin perceptibly to lengthen. Our barbarian ancestors were worshipers of the sun, and they celebrated his victory over the hosts of night. Such a festival was natural and beautiful. The most natural of all religions is the worship of the sun. Christianity adopted this festival. It borrowed from the Pagans the best it has.

I believe in Christmas and in every day that has been set apart for joy. We in America have too much work and not enough play. We are too much like the English.

I think it was Heinrich Heine who said that he thought a blaspheming Frenchman was a more pleasing object to God than a praying Englishman. We take our joys too sadly. I am in favor of all the good free days—the more the better.

Christmas is a good day to forgive and forget—a good day to throw away prejudices and hatreds—a good day to fill your heart and your house, and the hearts and houses of others, with sunshine.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

COL. INGERSOLL'S REPLY TO DR. BUCKLEY.

II.

WHENEVER an orthodox editor attacks an unbeliever, look out for kindness, charity and love.

The gentle editor of the *Christian Advocate* charges me with having written three "gigantic falsehoods," and he points them out as follows :

First—"Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief."

Second—"It [Christianity] has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men."

Third—"Not satisfied with that, it [Christianity] has deprived God of the pardoning power."

Now, let us take up these "gigantic falsehoods" in their order and see whether they are in accord with the New Testament or not—whether they are supported by the creed of the Methodist Church.

I insist that Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief.

According to the orthodox creeds, Christianity came with the tidings that the human race was totally depraved, and that all men were in a lost condition, and that all who rejected or failed to believe the new religion, would be tormented in eternal fire.

These were not "tidings of great joy."

If the passengers on some great ship were told that the ship was to be wrecked, that a few would be saved and that nearly all would go to the bottom, would they talk about "tidings of great joy"? It is to be presumed that Christ knew what his mission was, and what he came for. He says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother." In my judgment, these are not "tidings of great joy."

Now, as to the message of eternal grief:

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous [meaning the Methodists] into life eternal."

"He that believeth not shall be damned."

“He that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

“And the ‘smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.”

Knowing, as we do, that but few people have been believers, that during the last eighteen hundred years not one in a hundred has died in the faith, and that consequently nearly all the dead are in hell, it can truthfully be said that Christianity came with a message of eternal grief.

Now, as to the second “gigantic falsehood,” to the effect that Christianity filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men.

In the Old Testament there is nothing about punishment in some other world, nothing about the flames and torments of hell. When Jehovah killed one of his enemies he was satisfied. His revenge was glutted when the victim was dead. The Old Testament gave the future to sleep and oblivion. But in the New Testament we are told that the punishment in another world is everlasting, and that

“the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.”

This awful doctrine, these frightful texts, filled the future with fear and flame. Building on these passages, the orthodox churches have constructed a penitentiary, in which nearly all the sons of men are to be imprisoned and tormented forever, and of this prison God is the keeper. The doors are opened only to receive.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is the infamy of infamies. As I have often said, the man who believes in eternal torment, in the justice of endless pain, is suffering from at least two diseases—petrification of the heart and putrefaction of the brain.

The next question is whether Christianity has deprived God of the pardoning power.

The Methodist Church and every orthodox church teaches that this life is a period of probation ; that there is no chance given for reformation after death ; that God gives no opportunity to repent in another world.

This is the doctrine of the Christian world. If this dogma be true, then God will never release a soul from hell—the pardoning power will never be exercised.

How happy God will be and how happy all the

saved will be, knowing that billions and billions of his children, of their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, and children are convicts in the eternal dungeons, and that the words of pardon will never be spoken!

Yet this is in accordance with the promise contained in the New Testament, of happiness here and eternal joy hereafter, to those who would desert brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children.

It seems to me clear that Christianity did not bring "tidings of great joy," but that it came with a "message of eternal grief"—that it did "fill the future with fear and flame," that it did make God "the keeper of an eternal penitentiary," that the penitentiary "was destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men," and that "it deprived God of the pardoning power."

Of course you can find passages full of peace, in the Bible, others of war—some filled with mercy, and others cruel as the fangs of a wild beast.

According to the Methodists, God has an eternal prison—an everlasting Siberia. There is to be an eternity of grief, of agony and shame.

What do I think of what the Doctor says about the *Telegram* for having published my Christmas sermon?

The editor of the *Christian Advocate* has no idea of what intellectual liberty means. He ought to know that a man should not be insulted because another man disagrees with him.

What right has Dr. Buckley to disagree with Cardinal Gibbons, and what right has Cardinal Gibbons to disagree with Dr. Buckley? The same right that I have to disagree with them both.

I do not warn people against reading Catholic or Methodist papers or books. But I do tell them to investigate for themselves—to stand by what they believe to be true, to deny the false, and, above all things, to preserve their mental manhood. The good Doctor wants the *Telegram* destroyed—wants all religious people to unite for the purpose of punishing the *Telegram*—because it published something with which the reverend Doctor does not agree, or rather that does not agree with the Doctor.

It is too late. That day has faded in the West of the past. The doctor of theology has lost his power. Theological thunder has lost its lightning—it is nothing now but noise, pleasing those who make it and amusing those who hear.

The *Telegram* has nothing to fear. It is, in the highest sense, a newspaper—wide-awake, alive, al-

ways on time, good to its friends, fair with its enemies, and true to the public.

What have I to say to the Doctor's personal abuse ?

Nothing. A man may call me a devil, or the devil, or he may say that I am incapable of telling the truth, or that I tell lies, and yet all this proves nothing. My arguments remain unanswered.

I cannot afford to call Dr. Buckley names. I have good mental manners. The cause I represent (in part) is too great, too sacred, to be stained by an ignorant or a malicious personality.

I know that men do as they must with the light they have, and so I say—More light !

REPLY TO

REV. J. M. KING AND REV. THOMAS DIXON, JR.

III.

THE Rev. James M. King—who seems to have taken this occasion to become known—finds fault because “blasphemous utterances concerning Christmas” were published in the *Telegram*, and were allowed “to greet the eyes of innocent children and pure women.”

How is it possible to blaspheme a day? One day is not, in and of itself, holier than another—that is to say, two equal spaces of time are substantially alike. We call a day “good” or “bad” according to what happens in the day. A day filled with happiness, with kind words, with noble deeds, is a good day. A day filled with misfortunes and anger and misery we call a bad day. But how is it possible to blaspheme a day?

A man may or may not believe that Christ was born on the 25th of December, and yet he may fill

that day, so far as he is concerned, with good thoughts and words and deeds. Another may really believe that Christ was born on that day, and yet do his worst to make all his friends unhappy. But how can the rights of what are called "clean families" be violated by reading the honest opinions of others as to whether Christmas is kept in honor of the birth of Christ, or in honor of the triumph of the sun over the hosts of darkness? Are Christian families so weak intellectually that they cannot bear to hear the other side? Or is their case so weak that the slightest evidence overthrows it? Why do all these ministers insist that it is ill-bred to even raise a question as to the truth of the improbable, or as to the improbability of the impossible?

A minister says to me that I am going to hell—that I am bound to be punished forever and ever—and thereupon I say to him: "There is no hell; you are mistaken; your Bible is not inspired; no human being is to suffer agony forever;" and thereupon, with an injured look, he asks me this question: "Why do you hurt my feelings?" It does not occur to him that I have the slightest right to object to his sentence of eternal grief.

Does the gentleman imagine that true men and pure women cannot differ with him? There are

many thousands of people who love and honor the memory of Jesus Christ, who yet have not the slightest belief in his divine origin, and who do not for one moment imagine that he was other than a good and heroic man. And there are thousands of people who admire the character of Jesus Christ who do not believe that he ever existed—who admire the character of Christ as they admire Imogen, or Perdita, not believing that any of the characters mentioned actually lived.

And it may be well enough here to state that no human being hates any really good man or good woman—that is, no human being hates a man known to be good—a woman known to be pure and good. No human being hates a lovable character.

It is perfectly easy for any one with the slightest imagination to understand how other people differ from him. I do not attribute a bad motive to a man simply because he disagrees with me. I do not say that a man is a Christian or a Mohammedan “for revenue only.” I do not say that a man joins the Democratic party simply for office, or that he marches with the Republicans simply for position. I am willing to hear his reasons—with his motives I have nothing to do.

Mr. King imagines that I have denounced Chris-

tianity "for revenue only." Is he willing to admit that we have drifted so far from orthodox religion that the way to make money is to denounce Christianity? I can hardly believe, for joy, that liberty of thought has advanced so far. I regret exceedingly that there is not an absolute foundation for his remark. I am indeed sorry that it is possible in this world of ours for any human being to make a living out of the ignorance and fear of his fellow-men. Still, it gives me great hope for the future to read, even in this ignorant present, that there is one man, and that man myself, who advocates human liberty—the absolute enfranchisement of the soul—and does it "for revenue"—because this charge is such a splendid compliment to my fellow-men.

Possibly the remark of the Rev. Mr. King will be gratifying to the *Telegram* and will satisfy that brave and progressive sheet that it is in harmony with the intelligence of the age.

My opinion is that the *Telegram* will receive the praise of enlightened and generous people.

Personally I judge a man not so much by his theories as by his practice, and I would much rather meet on the desert—were I about to perish for want of water—a Mohammedan who would give me a drink than a Christian who would not; because,

after all is said and done, we are compelled to judge people by their actions.

I do not know what takes place in the invisible world called the brain, inhabited by the invisible something we call the mind. All that takes place there is invisible and soundless. This mind, hidden in this brain, masked by flesh, remains forever unseen, and the only evidence we can possibly have as to what occurs in that world, we obtain from the actions of the man, of the woman. By these actions we judge of the character, of the soul. So I make up my mind as to whether a man is good or bad, not by his theories, but by his actions.

Under no circumstances can the expression of an honest opinion, couched in becoming language, amount to blasphemy. And right here it may be well enough to inquire : What is blasphemy ?

A man who knowingly assaults the true, who knowingly endeavors to stain the pure, who knowingly maligns the good and noble, is a blasphemer. A man who deserts the truth because it is unpopular is a blasphemer. He who runs with the hounds knowing that the hare is in the right is a blasphemer.

In the soul of every man, or in the temple inhabited by the soul, there is one niche in which can be found the statue of the ideal. In the presence of

this statue the good man worships—the bad man blasphemes—that is to say, he is not true to the ideal.

A man who slanders a pure woman or an honest man is a blasphemer. So, too, a man who does not give the honest transcript of his mind is a blasphemer. If a man really thinks the character of Jehovah, as portrayed in the Old Testament, is good, and he denounces Jehovah as bad, he is a blasphemer. If he really believes that the character of Jehovah, as portrayed in the Old Testament, is bad, and he pronounces it good, he is a blasphemer and a coward.

All laws against “blasphemy” have been passed by the numerically strong and intellectually weak. These laws have been passed by those who, finding no help in logic, appealed to the legislature.

Back of all these superstitions you will find some self-interest. I do not say that this is true in every case, but I do say that if priests had not been fond of mutton, lambs never would have been sacrificed to God. Nothing was ever carried to the temple that the priest could not use, and it always so happened that God wanted what his agents liked.

Now, I will not say that all priests have been priests “for revenue only,” but I must say that the

history of the world tends to show that the sacerdotal class prefer revenue without religion to religion without revenue.

I am much obliged to the Rev. Mr. King for admitting that an infidel has a right to publish his views at his own expense, and with the utmost cheerfulness I accord that right to a Christian. The only thing I have ever objected to is the publication of his views at the expense of others.

I cannot admit, however, that the ideas contained in what is known as the Christmas Sermon are "revolting to a vast majority of the people who give character to the community in which we live." I suppose that a very large majority of men and women who disagree with me are perfectly satisfied that I have the right to disagree with them, and that I do not disagree with them to any greater degree than they disagree with me. And I also imagine that a very large majority of intelligent people are perfectly willing to hear the other side.

I do not regard religious opinions or political opinions as exotics that have to be kept under glass, protected from the frosts of common sense or the tyrannous north wind of logic. Such plants are hardly worth preserving. They certainly ought to be hardy enough to stand the climate of free discus-

sion, and if they cannot, the sooner they die the better.

I do not think there was anything blasphemous or impure in the words published by the *Telegram*. The most that can possibly be said against them, calculated to excite the prejudice of Christians, is that they were true—that they cannot be answered except by abuse.

It is not possible, in this day and generation, to stay the rising flood of intellectual freedom by keeping the names of thinkers out of print. The church has had the field for eighteen hundred years. For most of this time it has held the sword and purse of the world. For many centuries it controlled colleges and universities and schools. It had within its gift wealth and honor. It held the keys, so far as this world is concerned, of heaven and hell—that is to say, of prosperity and misfortune. It pursued its enemies even to the grave. It reddened the scaffold with the best blood, and kept the sword of persecution wet for many centuries. Thousands and thousands have died in its dungeons. Millions of reputations have been blasted by its slanders. It has made millions of widows and orphans, and it has not only ruled this world, but it has pretended to hold the keys of eternity, and under this pretence

it has sentenced countless millions to eternal flames.

At last the spirit of independence rose against its monstrous assumptions. It has been growing somewhat weaker. It has been for many years gradually losing its power. The sword of the state belongs now to the people. The partnership between altar and throne has in many countries been dissolved. The adulterous marriage of church and state has ceased to exist. Men are beginning to express their honest thoughts. In the arena where speech is free, superstition is driven to the wall. Man relies more and more on the facts in nature, and the real priest is the interpreter of nature. The pulpit is losing its power. In a little while religion will take its place with astrology, with the black art, and its ministers will take rank with magicians and sleight-of-hand performers.

With regard to the letter of the Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr., I have but little to say.

I am glad that he believes in a free platform and a free press—that he, like Lucretia Mott, believes in “truth for authority, and not authority for truth.” At the same time I do not see how the fact that I am not a scientist has the slightest bearing upon the question; but if there is any fact that I have avoided

or misstated, then I wish that fact to be pointed out. I admit also, that I am a "sentimentalist"—that is, that I am governed, to a certain extent, by sentiment—that my mind is so that cruelty is revolting and that mercy excites my love and admiration. I admit that I am so much of "a sentimentalist" that I have no love for the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and that it is impossible for me to believe a creed that fills the prison house of hell with countless billions of men, women and children.

I am also glad that the reverend gentleman admits that I have "stabbed to the heart hundreds of superstitions and lies," and I hope to stab many, many more, and if I succeed in stabbing all lies to the heart there will be no foundation left for what I called "orthodox" Christianity—but goodness will survive, justice will live, and the flower of mercy will shed its perfume forever.

When we take into consideration the fact that the Rev. Mr. Dixon is a minister and believes that he is called upon to deliver to the people a divine message, I do not wonder that he makes the following assertion : "If God could choose Balaam's ass to speak a divine message, I do not see why he could not utilize the Colonel." It is natural for a man to justify himself and to defend his own occupation. Mr. Dixon,

however, will remember that the ass was much superior to the prophet of God, and that the argument was all on the side of the ass. And, furthermore, that the spiritual discernment of the ass far exceeded that of the prophet. It was the ass who saw the angel when the prophet's eye was dim. I suggest to the Rev. Mr. Dixon that he read the account once more, and he will find—

First, that the ass *first* saw the angel of the Lord ; *second*, that the prophet Balaam was cruel, unreasonable, and brutal ; *third*, that the prophet so lost his temper that he wanted to kill the innocent ass, and the ass, not losing her temper, reasoned with the prophet and demonstrated not only her intellectual but her moral superiority. In addition to all this the angel of the Lord had to open the eyes of the prophet—in other words, had to work a miracle—in order to make the prophet equal to the ass, and not only so, but rebuked him for his cruelty. And this same angel admitted that without any miracle whatever the ass saw him—the angel—showing that the spiritual discernment of the ass in those days was far superior to that of the prophet.

I regret that the Rev. Mr. King loses his temper and that the Rev. Mr. Dixon is not quite polite.

All of us should remember that passion clouds the

judgment, and that he who seeks for victory loses sight of the cause.

And there is another thing : He who has absolute confidence in the justice of his position can afford to be good-natured. Strength is the foundation of kindness ; weakness is often malignant, and when argument fails passion comes to the rescue.

Let us be good-natured. Let us have respect for the rights of each other.

The course pursued by the *Telegram* is worthy of all praise. It has not only been just to both sides, but it has been—as is its custom—true to the public.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

INGERSOLL AGAIN ANSWERS HIS CRITICS.

IV.

To the Editor of the Evening Telegram :

SOME of the gentlemen who have given their ideas through the columns of the *Telegram* have wandered from the questions under discussion. It may be well enough to state what is really in dispute.

I was called to account for having stated that Christianity did not bring "tidings of great joy," but a message of eternal grief—that it filled the future with fear and flame—made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, in which most of the children of men were to be imprisoned forever, and that, not satisfied with that, it had deprived God of the pardoning power.

These statements were called "mountainous lies" by the Rev. Dr. Buckley, and because the *Telegram* had published the "Christmas Sermon" containing these statements, he insisted that such a paper

should not be allowed in the families of Christians or of Jews—in other words, that the *Telegram* should be punished, and that good people should refuse to allow that sheet to come into their homes.

It will probably be admitted by all fair-minded people that if the orthodox creeds be true, then Christianity was and is the bearer of a message of eternal grief, and a large majority of the human race are to become eternal convicts, and God has deprived himself of the pardoning power. According to those creeds, no word of mercy to any of the lost can ever fall from the lips of the Infinite.

The Universalists deny that such was or is the real message of Christianity. They insist that all are finally to be saved. If that doctrine be true, then I admit that Christianity came with “tidings of great joy.”

Personally I have no quarrel with the Universalist Church. I have no quarrel with any creed that expresses hope for all of the human race. I find fault with no one for filling the future with joy—for dreaming splendid dreams and for uttering splendid prophecies. I do not object to Christianity because it promises heaven to a few, but because it threatens the many with perdition.

It does not seem possible to me that a God who

loved men to that degree that he died that they might be saved, abandons his children the moment they are dead. It seems to me that an infinite God might do something for a soul after it has reached the other world.

Is it possible that infinite wisdom can do no more than is done for a majority of souls in this world?

Think of the millions born in ignorance and filth, raised in poverty and crime. Think of the millions who are only partially developed in this world. Think of the weakness of the will, of the power of passion. Think of the temptations innumerable. Think, too, of the tyranny of man, of the arrogance of wealth and position, of the sufferings of the weak—and can we then say that an infinite God has done, in this world, all that could be done for the salvation of his children? Is it not barely possible that something may be done in another world? Is there nothing left for God to do for a poor, ignorant, criminal human soul after it leaves this world? Can God do nothing except to pronounce the sentence of eternal pain?

I insist that if the orthodox creed be true, Christianity did not come with "tidings of great joy," but that its message was and is one of eternal grief.

If the orthodox creed be true, the universe is a

vast blunder—an infinite crime. Better, a thousand times, that every pulse of life should cease—better that all the gods should fall palsied from their thrones, than that the creed of Christendom should be true.

There is another question and that involves the freedom of the press.

The *Telegram* has acted with the utmost fairness and with the highest courage. After all, the American people admire the man who takes his stand and bravely meets all comers. To be an instrumentality of progress, the press must be free. Only the free can carry a torch. Liberty sheds light.

The editor or manager of a newspaper occupies a public position, and he must not treat his patrons as though they were weak and ignorant children. He must not, in the supposed interest of any ism, suppress the truth—neither must he be dictated to by any church or any society of believers or unbelievers. The *Telegram*, by its course, has given a certificate of its manliness, and the public, by its course, has certified that it appreciates true courage.

All Christians should remember that facts are not sectarian, and that the sciences are not bound by the creeds. We should remember that there are no such things as Methodist mathematics, or Baptist

botany, or Catholic chemistry. The sciences are secular.

The Rev. Mr. Peters seems to have mistaken the issues—and yet, in some things, I agree with him. He is certainly right when he says that “ Mr. Buckley’s cry to boycott the *Telegram* is unmanly and un-American,” but I am not certain that he is right when he says that it is un-Christian.

The church has not been in the habit of pursuing enemies with kind words and charitable deeds. To tell the truth, it has always been rather relentless. It has preached forgiveness, but it has never forgiven. There is in the history of Christendom no instance where the church has extended the hand of friendship to a man who denied the truth of its creed.

There is in the church no spirit—no climate—of compromise. In the nature of things there can be none, because the church claims that it is absolutely right—that there is only one road leading to heaven. It demands unconditional surrender. It will not bear contradiction. It claims to have the absolute truth. For these reasons it cannot consistently compromise, any more than a mathematician could change the multiplication table to meet the view of some one who should deny that five times five are twenty-five.

The church does not give its opinion—it claims to know—it demands belief. Honesty, industry, generosity count for nothing in the absence of belief. It has taught and still teaches that no man can reach heaven simply through good and honest deeds. It believes and teaches that the man who relies upon himself will be eternally punished—and why should the church forgive a man whom it thinks its God is waiting somewhat impatiently to damn ?

The Rev. Mr. Peters asks—and probably honestly thinks that the questions are pertinent to the issues involved—“ What has infidelity done for the world ? What colleges, hospitals, and schools has it founded ? What has it done for the elevation of public morals ? ” And he inquires what science or art has been originated by infidelity. He asks how many slaves it has liberated, how many inebriates it has reclaimed, how many fallen women it has restored, and what it did for the relief of the wounded and dying soldiers ; and concludes by asking what life it ever assisted to higher holiness, and what death it has ever cheered.

Although these questions have nothing whatever to do with the matters under discussion, still it may be well enough to answer them.

It is cheerfully admitted that hospitals and asylums have been built by Christians in Christian

countries, and it is also admitted that hospitals and asylums have been built in countries not Christian ; that there were such institutions in China thousands of years before Christ was born, and that many centuries before the establishment of any orthodox church there were asylums on the banks of the Nile—asylums for the old, the poor, the infirm—asylums for the blind and for the insane, and that the Egyptians, even of those days, endeavored to cure insanity with kindness and affection. The same is true of India and probably of most ancient nations.

There has always been more or less humanity in man—more or less goodness in the human heart. So far as we know, mothers have always loved their children. There must always have been more good than evil, otherwise the human race would have perished. The best things in the Christian religion came from the heart of man. Pagan lips uttered the sublimest of truths, and all ages have been redeemed by honesty, heroism, and love.

But let me answer these questions in their order.

First—As to the schools.

It is most cheerfully admitted that the Catholics have always been in favor of education—that is to say, of education enough to make a Catholic out of a heathen. It is also admitted that Protestants have

always been in favor of enough education to make a Protestant out of a Catholic. Many schools and many colleges have been established for the spread of what is called the Gospel and for the education of the clergy. Presbyterians have founded schools for the benefit of their creed. The Methodists have established colleges for the purpose of making Methodists. The same is true of nearly all the sects. As a matter of fact, these schools have in many important directions hindered rather than helped the cause of real education. The pupils were not taught to investigate for themselves. They were not allowed to think. They were told that thought is dangerous. They were stuffed and crammed with creeds—with the ideas of others. Their credulity was applauded and their curiosity condemned. If all the people had been educated in these sectarian schools, all the people would have been far more ignorant than they are. These schools have been, and most of them still are, the enemies of higher education, and just to the extent that they are under the control of theologians they are hindrances, and just to the extent that they have become secularized they have been and are a benefit.

Our public-school system is not Christian. It is secular. Yet I admit that it never could have been

established without the assistance of Christians—neither could it have been supported without the assistance of others. But such is the value placed upon education that people of nearly all denominations, and of nearly all religions, and of nearly all opinions, for the most part agree that the children of a nation should be educated by the nation. Some religious people are opposed to these schools because they are not religious—because they do not teach some creed—but a large majority of the people stand by the public schools as they are. These schools are growing better and better, simply because they are growing less and less theological, more and more secular.

Infidelity, or agnosticism, or free thought, has insisted that only that should be taught in schools which somebody knows or has good reason to believe.

The greatest professors in our colleges to-day are those who have the least confidence in the supernatural, and the schools that stand highest in the estimation of the most intelligent are those that have drifted farthest from the orthodox creeds. Free thought has always been and ever must be the friend of education. Without free thought there can be no such thing—in the highest sense—as a

school. Unless the mind is free, there are no teachers and there are no pupils, in any just and splendid sense.

The church has been and still is the enemy of education, because it has been in favor of intellectual slavery, and the theological schools have been what might be called the deformatories of the human mind.

For instance : A man is graduated from an orthodox university. In this university he has studied astronomy, and yet he believes that Joshua stopped the sun. He has studied geology, and yet he asserts the truth of the Mosaic cosmogony. He has studied chemistry, and yet believes that water was turned into wine. He has been taught the ordinary theory of cause and effect, and at the same time he thoroughly believes in the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes. Can such an institution, with any propriety, be called a seat of learning? Can we not say of such a university what Bruno said of Oxford : " Learning is dead and Oxford is its widow."

Year after year the religious colleges are improving—simply because they are becoming more and more secular, less and less theological. Whether infidelity has founded universities or not, it can truthfully be said that the spirit of investigation, the spirit

of free thought, the attitude of mental independence, contended for by those who are called infidels, have made schools useful instead of hurtful.

Can it be shown that any infidel has ever raised his voice against education? Can there be found in the literature of free thought one line against the enlightenment of the human race? Has free thought ever endeavored to hide or distort a fact? Has it not always appealed to the senses—to demonstration? It has not said, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;” but it has said, “He that hath brains to think, let him think.”

The object of a school should be to ascertain truth in every direction, to the end that man may know the conditions of happiness—and every school should be absolutely free. No teacher should be bound by anything except a perceived fact. He should not be the slave of a creed, engaged in the business of enslaving others.

So much for schools.

Second—As to public morals.

Christianity teaches that all offences can be forgiven. Every church unconsciously allows people to commit crimes on a credit. I do not mean by this that any church consciously advocates immorality. I most cheerfully admit that thousands and thousands

of ministers are endeavoring to do good—that they are pure, self-denying men, trying to make this world better. But there is a frightful defect in their philosophy. They say to the bank cashier : You must not steal, you must not take a dollar—larceny is wrong, it is contrary to all law, human and divine—but if you do steal every cent in the bank, God will as gladly, quickly forgive you in Canada as he will in the United States. On the other hand, what is called infidelity says : There is no being in the universe who rewards, and there is no being who punishes—every act has its consequences. If the act is good, the consequences are good ; if the act is bad, the consequences are bad ; and these consequences must be borne by the actor. It says to every human being : You must reap what you sow. There is no reward, there is no punishment, but there are consequences, and these consequences are the invisible and implacable police of nature. They cannot be avoided. They cannot be bribed. No power can awe them, and there is not gold enough in the world to make them pause. Even a God cannot induce them to release for one instant their victim.

This great truth is, in my judgment, the gospel of morality. If all men knew that they must inevitably bear the consequences of their own actions—if

they absolutely knew that they could not injure another without injuring themselves, the world, in my judgment, would be far better than it is.

Free thought has attacked the morality of what is called the atonement. The innocent should not suffer for the guilty, and if the innocent does suffer for the guilty, that cannot by any possibility justify the guilty. The reason a thing is wrong is because it, in some way, causes the innocent to suffer. This being the very essence of wrong, how can the suffering of innocence justify the guilty? If there be a world of joy, he who is worthy to enter that world must be willing to carry his own burdens in this.

So much for morality.

Third—As to sciences and art.

I do not believe that we are indebted to Christianity for any science. I do not remember that one science is mentioned in the New Testament. There is not one word, so far as I remember, about education—nothing about any science, nothing about art. The writers of the New Testament seem to have thought that the world was about coming to an end. This world was to be sacrificed absolutely to the next. The affairs of this life were not worth speaking of. All people were exhorted to prepare at once for the other life.

The sciences have advanced in the proportion that they did not interfere with orthodox theology. To the extent that they were supposed to interfere with theology they have been obstructed and denounced. Astronomy was found to be inconsistent with the Scriptures, and the astronomers were imprisoned and despised. Geology contradicted the Mosaic account, and the geologists were denounced and persecuted. Every step taken in astronomy was taken in spite of the church, and every fact in geology had to fight its way. The same is true as to the science of medicine. The church wished to cure disease by necromancy, by charm and prayer, and with the bones of the saints. The church wished man to rely entirely upon God—that is to say, upon the church—and not upon himself. The physician interfered with the power and prosperity of the priest, and those who appealed to physicians were denounced as lacking faith in God. This state of things existed even in the Old Testament times. A king failed to send for the prophets, but sent for a physician, and then comes this piece of grim humor : “And Asa slept with his fathers.”

The great names in science are not those of recognized saints.

BRUNO—one of the greatest and bravest of men—

greatest of all martyrs—perished at the stake, because he insisted on the existence of other worlds and taught the astronomy of Galileo.

HUMBOLDT—in some respects the wisest man known to the scientific world—denied the existence of the supernatural and “the truths of revealed religion,” and yet he revolutionized the thought of his day and left a legacy of intellectual glory to the race.

DARWIN—greatest of scientists—so great that our time will probably be known as “Darwin’s Century”—had not the slightest confidence in any possible phase of the so-called supernatural. This great man left the creed of Christendom without a foundation. He brought as witnesses against the inspiration of the Scriptures such a multitude of facts, such an overwhelming amount of testimony, that it seems impossible to me that any unprejudiced man can, after hearing the testimony, remain a believer in evangelical religion. He accomplished more than all the schools, colleges, and universities that Christianity has founded. He revolutionized the philosophy of the civilized world.

The writers who have done most for science have been the most bitterly opposed by the church. There is hardly a valuable book in the libraries of the world that cannot be found on the “Index Ex-

purgatorius." Kant and Fichte and Spinoza were far above and beyond the orthodox world. Voltaire did more for freedom than any other man, and yet the church denounced him with a fury amounting to insanity—called him an atheist, although he believed not only in God, but in special providence. He was opposed to the church—that is to say, opposed to slavery, and for that reason he was despised.

And what shall I say of D'Holbach, of Hume, of Buckle, of Draper, of Haeckel, of Büchner, of Tyndall and Huxley, of Auguste Comte, and hundreds and thousands of others who have filled the scientific world with light and the heart of man with love and kindness?

It may be well enough, in regard to art, to say that Christianity is indebted to Greece and Rome for its highest conceptions, and it may be well to add that for many centuries Christianity did the best it could to destroy the priceless marbles of Greece and Rome. A few were buried, and in that way were saved from Christian fury.

The same is true of the literature of the classic world. A few fragments were rescued, and these became the seeds of modern literature. A few statues were preserved, and they are to-day models for all the world.

Of course it will be admitted that there is much art in Christian lands, because, in spite of the creeds, Christians, so-called, have turned their attention to this world. They have beautified their homes, they have endeavored to clothe themselves in purple and fine linen. They have been forced from banquets or from luxury by the difficulty of camels going through the eyes of needles or the impossibility of carrying water to the rich man. They have cultivated this world, and the arts have lived. Did they obey the precepts that they find in their sacred writings there would be no art, they would "take no thought for the morrow," they would "consider the lilies of the field."

Fourth—As to the liberation of slaves.

It was exceedingly unfortunate for the Rev. Mr. Peters that he spoke of slavery. The Bible upholds human slavery—white slavery. The Bible was quoted by all slaveholders and slave-traders. The man who went to Africa to steal women and children took the Bible with him. He planted himself firmly on the Word of God. As Whittier says of White-field :

"He bade the slave ship speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by the wings of the Holy Ghost."

So when the poor wretches were sold to the plant-

ers, the planters defended their action by reading the Bible. When a poor woman was sold, her children torn from her breast, the auction block on which she stood was the Bible ; the auctioneer who sold her quoted the Scriptures ; the man who bought her repeated the quotations, and the ministers from the pulpit said to the weeping woman, as her child was carried away : “ Servants, be obedient unto your masters.”

Freethinkers in all ages have been opposed to slavery. Thomas Paine did more for human liberty than any other man who ever stood upon the western world. The first article he ever wrote in this country was one against the institution of slavery. Freethinkers have also been in favor of free bodies. Freethinkers have always said “ free hands,” and the infidels, the wide world over, have been friends of freedom.

Fifth—As to the reclamation of inebriates.

Much has been said, and for many years, on the subject of temperance—much has been uttered by priests and laymen—and yet there seems to be a subtle relation between rum and religion. Scotland is extremely orthodox, yet it is not extremely temperate. England is nothing if not religious, and London is, par excellence, the Christian city of the world, and

yet it is the most intemperate. The Mohammedans—followers of a false prophet—do not drink.

Sixth—As to the humanity of infidelity.

Can it be said that people have cared for the wounded and dying only because they were orthodox?

Is it not true that religion, in its efforts to propagate the creed of forgiveness by the sword, has caused the death of more than one hundred and fifty millions of human beings? Is it not true that where the church has cared for one orphan it has created hundreds? Can Christianity afford to speak of war?

The Christian nations of the world to-day are armed against each other. In Europe, all that can be gathered by taxation—all that can be borrowed by pledging the prosperity of the future—the labor of those yet unborn—is used for the purpose of keeping Christians in the field, to the end that they may destroy other Christians, or at least prevent other Christians from destroying them. Europe is covered with churches and fortifications, with temples and with forts—hundreds of thousands of priests, millions of soldiers, countless Bibles and countless bayonets—and that whole country is oppressed and impoverished for the purpose of carrying on war. The people have become deformed by labor, and yet Christianity boasts of peace.

Seventh—"And what death has infidelity ever cheered?"

Is it possible for the orthodox Christian to cheer the dying when the dying is told that there is a world of eternal pain, and that he, unless he has been forgiven, is to be an eternal convict? Will it cheer him to know that, even if he is to be saved, countless millions are to be lost? Is it possible for the Christian religion to put a smile upon the face of death?

On the other hand, what is called infidelity says to the dying: What happens to you will happen to all. If there be another world of joy, it is for all. If there is another life, every human being will have the eternal opportunity of doing right—the eternal opportunity to live, to reform, to enjoy. There is no monster in the sky. There is no Moloch who delights in the agony of his children. These frightful things are savage dreams.

Infidelity puts out the fires of hell with the tears of pity.

Infidelity puts the seven-hued arch of Hope over every grave.

Let us then, gentlemen, come back to the real questions under discussion. Let us not wander away.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Jan'y 9, 1891.

INGERSOLL CONTINUES THE BATTLE.

V.

NO one objects to the morality of Christianity. The industrious people of the world—those who have anything—are, as a rule, opposed to larceny ; a very large majority of people object to being murdered, and so we have laws against larceny and murder. A large majority of people believe in what they call, or what they understand to be, justice—at least as between others. There is no very great difference of opinion among civilized people as to what is or is not moral.

It cannot truthfully be said that the man who attacks Buddhism attacks all morality. He does not attack goodness, justice, mercy, or anything that tends in his judgment to the welfare of mankind ; but he attacks Buddhism. So one attacking what is called Christianity does not attack kindness, charity, or any virtue. He attacks something that has been added

to the virtues. He does not attack the flower, but what he believes to be the parasite.

If people, when they speak of Christianity, include the virtues common to all religions, they should not give Christianity credit for all the good that has been done. There were millions of virtuous men and women, millions of heroic and self-denying souls before Christianity was known.

It does not seem possible to me that love, kindness, justice, or charity ever caused any one who possessed and practiced these virtues to persecute his fellow-man on account of a difference of belief. If Christianity has persecuted, some reason must exist outside of the virtues it has inculcated. If this reason—this cause—is inherent in that something else, which has been added to the ordinary virtues, then Christianity can properly be held accountable for the persecution. Of course back of Christianity is the nature of man, and, primarily, it may be responsible.

Is there anything in Christianity that will account for such persecutions—for the Inquisition? It certainly was taught by the church that belief was necessary to salvation, and it was thought at the same time that the fate of man was eternal punishment; that the state of man was that of depravity, and that

there was but one way by which he could be saved, and that was through belief—through faith. As long as this was honestly believed, Christians would not allow heretics or infidels to preach a doctrine to their wives, to their children, or to themselves which, in their judgment, would result in the damnation of souls.

The law gives a father the right to kill one who is about to do great bodily harm to his son. Now, if a father has the right to take the life of a man simply because he is attacking the body of his son, how much more would he have the right to take the life of one who was about to assassinate the soul of his son !

Christians reasoned in this way. In addition to this, they felt that God would hold the community responsible if the community allowed a blasphemer to attack the true religion. Therefore they killed the freethinker, or rather the free talker, in self-defence.

At the bottom of religious persecution is the doctrine of self-defence ; that is to say, the defence of the soul. If the founder of Christianity had plainly said : “ It is not necessary to believe in order to be saved ; it is only necessary to do, and he who really loves his fellow-men, who is kind,

honest, just and charitable, is to be forever blest"—if he had only said that, there would probably have been but little persecution.

If he had added to this : " You must not persecute in my name. The religion I teach is the Religion of Love—not the Religion of Force and Hatred. You must not imprison your fellow-men. You must not stretch them upon racks, or crush their bones in iron boots. You must not flay them alive. You must not cut off their eyelids, or pour molten lead into their ears. You must treat all with absolute kindness. If you cannot convert your neighbor by example, persuasion, argument, that is the end. You must never resort to force, and, whether he believes as you do or not, treat him always with kindness"—his followers then would not have murdered their fellows in his name.

If Christ was in fact God, he knew the persecutions that would be carried on in his name ; he knew the millions that would suffer death through torture ; and yet he died without saying one word to prevent what he must have known, if he were God, would happen.

All that Christianity has added to morality is worthless and useless. Not only so—it has been hurtful. Take Christianity from morality and the

useful is left, but take morality from Christianity and the useless remains.

Now, falling back on the old assertion, "By its fruits we may know Christianity," then I think we are justified in saying that, as Christianity consists of a mixture of morality and *something else*, and as morality never has persecuted a human being, and as Christianity has persecuted millions, the cause of the persecution must be the *something else* that was added to morality.

I cannot agree with the reverend gentleman when he says that "Christianity has taught mankind the priceless value and dignity of human nature." On the other hand, Christianity has taught that the whole human race is by nature depraved, and that if God should act in accordance with his sense of justice, all the sons of men would be doomed to eternal pain. Human nature has been derided, has been held up to contempt and scorn, all our desires and passions denounced as wicked and filthy.

Dr. Da Costa asserts that Christianity has taught mankind the value of freedom. It certainly has not been the advocate of free thought; and what is freedom worth if the mind is to be enslaved?

Dr. Da Costa knows that millions have been sacrificed in their efforts to be free; that is, millions have

been sacrificed for exercising their freedom as against the church.

It is not true that the church "has taught and established the fact of human brotherhood." This has been the result of a civilization to which Christianity itself has been hostile.

Can we prove that "the church established human brotherhood" by banishing the Jews from Spain ; by driving out the Moors ; by the tortures of the Inquisition ; by butchering the Covenanters of Scotland ; by the burning of Bruno and Servetus ; by the persecution of the Irish ; by whipping and hanging Quakers in New England ; by the slave trade ; and by the hundreds of wars waged in the name of Christ ?

We all know that the Bible upholds slavery in its very worst and most cruel form ; and how it can be said that a religion founded upon a Bible that upholds the institution of slavery has taught and established the fact of human brotherhood, is beyond my imagination to conceive.

Neither do I think it true that "we are indebted to Christianity for the advancement of science, art, philosophy, letters and learning."

I cheerfully admit that we are indebted to Christianity for some learning, and that the human mind has been developed by the discussion of the absurdi-

ties of superstition. Certainly millions and millions have had what might be called mental exercise, and their minds may have been somewhat broadened by the examination, even, of these absurdities, contradictions, and impossibilities. The church was not the friend of science or learning when it burned Vanini for writing his "Dialogues Concerning Nature." What shall we say of the "Index Expurgatorius"? For hundreds of years all books of any particular value were placed on the "Index," and good Catholics forbidden to read them. Was this in favor of science and learning?

That we are indebted to Christianity for the advancement of science seems absurd. What science? Christianity was certainly the enemy of astronomy, and I believe that it was Mr. Draper who said that astronomy took her revenge, so that not a star that glitters in all the heavens bears a Christian name.

Can it be said that the church has been the friend of geology, or of any true philosophy? Let me show how this is impossible.

The church accepts the Bible as an inspired book. Then the only object is to find its meaning, and if that meaning is opposed to any result that the human mind may have reached, the meaning stands and the result reached by the mind must be abandoned.

For hundreds of years the Bible was the standard, and whenever anything was asserted in any science contrary to the Bible, the church immediately denounced the scientist. I admit the standard has been changed, and ministers are very busy, not trying to show that science does not agree with the Bible, but that the Bible agrees with science.

Certainly Christianity has done little for art. The early Christians destroyed all the marbles of Greece and Rome upon which they could lay their violent hands ; and nothing has been produced by the Christian world equal to the fragments that were accidentally preserved. There have been many artists who were Christians ; but they were not artists because they were Christians ; because there have been many Christians who were not artists. It cannot be said that art is born of any creed. The mode of expression may be determined, and probably is to a certain degree, by the belief of the artist ; but not his artistic perception and feeling.

So, Galileo did not make his discoveries because he was a Christian, but in spite of it. His Bible was the other way, and so was his creed. Consequently, they could not by any possibility have assisted him. Kepler did not discover or announce what are known as the "Three Laws" because he was a

Christian ; but, as I said about Galileo, in spite of his creed.

Every Christian, who has really found out and demonstrated and clung to a fact inconsistent with the absolute inspiration of the Scriptures, has done so certainly without the assistance of his creed.

Let me illustrate this : When our ancestors were burning each other to please God ; when they were ready to destroy a man with sword and flame for teaching the rotundity of the world, the Moors in Spain were teaching geography to their children with brass globes. So, too, they had observatories and knew something of the orbits of the stars.

They did not find out these things because they were Mohammedans, or on account of their belief in the impossible. They were far beyond the Christians, intellectually, and it has been very poetically said by Mrs. Browning, that " Science was thrust into the brain of Europe on the point of a Moorish lance."

From the Arabs we got our numerals, making mathematics of the higher branches practical. We also got from them the art of making cotton paper, which is almost at the foundation of modern intelligence. We learned from them to make cotton cloth, making cleanliness possible in Christendom.

So from among people of different religions we have learned many useful things ; but they did not discover them on account of their religion.

It will not do to say that the religion of Greece was true because the Greeks were the greatest sculptors. Neither is it an argument in favor of monarchy that Shakespeare, the greatest of men, was born and lived in a monarchy.

Dr. Da Costa takes one of the effects of a general cause, or of a vast number of causes, and makes it the cause, not only of other effects, but of the general cause. He seems to think that all events for many centuries, and especially all the good ones, were caused by Christianity.

As a matter of fact, the civilization of our time is the result of countless causes with which Christianity had little to do, except by way of hindrance.

Does the Doctor think that the material progress of the world was caused by this passage : " Take no thought for the morrow " ?

Does he seriously insist that the wealth of Christendom rests on this inspired declaration : " It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven " ?

The Rev. Mr. Peters, in answer, takes the ground

that the Bible has produced the richest and most varied literature the world has ever seen.

This, I think, is hardly true. Has not most of modern literature been produced in spite of the Bible? Did not Christians, for many generations, take the ground that the Bible was the only important book, and that books differing from the Bible should be destroyed?

If Christianity—Catholic and Protestant—could have had its way, the works of Voltaire, Spinoza, Hume, Paine, Humboldt, Darwin, Haeckel, Spencer, Comte, Huxley, Tyndall, Draper, Goethe, Gibbon, Buckle and Büchner would not have been published. In short, the philosophy that enlightens and the fiction that enriches the brain would not exist.

The greatest literature the world has ever seen is, in my judgment, the poetic—the dramatic; that is to say, the literature of fiction in its widest sense. Certainly if the church could have had control, the plays of Shakespeare never would have been written; the literature of the stage could not have existed; most works of fiction, and nearly all poetry, would have perished in the brain. So I think it hardly fair to say that “the Bible has produced the richest and most varied literature the world has ever seen.”

Thousands of theological books have been written on thousands of questions of no possible importance. Libraries have been printed on subjects not worth discussing—not worth thinking about—and that will, in a few years, be regarded as puerile by the whole world.

Mr. Peters, in his enthusiasm, asks this question :

“ Who raised our great institutions of learning ? Infidels never a stone of them ! ”

Stephen Girard founded the best institution of learning, the best charity, the noblest ever founded in this or any other land ; and under the roof built by his wisdom and his wealth many thousands of orphans have been reared, clothed, fed and educated, not only in books, but in avocations, and become happy and useful citizens. Under his will there has been distributed to the poor, fuel to the value of more than \$500,000 ; and this distribution goes on year after year.

One of the best observatories in the world was built by the generosity of James Lick, an infidel. I call attention to these two cases simply to show that the gentleman is mistaken, and that he was somewhat carried away by his zeal.

So, too, Mr. Peters takes the ground that “ we are indebted to Christianity for our chronology.”

According to Christianity this world has been peopled about six thousand years. Christian chronology gives the age of the first man, and then gives the line from father to son down to the flood, and from the flood down to the coming of Christ, showing that men have been upon the earth only about six thousand years. This chronology is infinitely absurd, and I do not believe that there is an intelligent, well-educated Christian in the world, having examined the subject, who will say that the Christian chronology is correct.

Neither can it, I think, truthfully be said that "we are indebted to Christianity for the continuation of history." The best modern historians of whom I have any knowledge are Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, Buckle and Draper.

Neither can I admit that "we are indebted to Christianity for natural philosophy."

I do not deny that some natural philosophers have also been Christians, or, rather, that some Christians have been natural philosophers to the extent that their Christianity permitted. But Lamarck and Humboldt and Darwin and Spencer and Haeckel and Huxley and Tyndall have done far more for natural philosophy than they have for orthodox religion.

Whoever believes in the miraculous must be the

enemy of natural philosophy. To him there is something above nature, liable to interfere with nature. Such a man has two classes of ideas in his mind, each inconsistent with the other. To the extent that he believes in the supernatural he is incapacitated for dealing with the natural, and to that extent fails to be a philosopher. Philosophy does not include the caprice of the Infinite. It is founded on the absolute integrity and invariability of nature.

Neither do I agree with the reverend gentleman when he says that "we are indebted to Christianity for our knowledge of philology."

The church taught for a long time that Hebrew was the first language, and that other languages had been derived from that; and for hundreds and hundreds of years the efforts of philologists were arrested simply because they started with that absurd assumption and believed in the Tower of Babel.

Christianity cannot now take the credit for "metaphysical research." It has always been the enemy of metaphysical research. It never has said to any human being, "Think!" It has always said, "Hear!" It does not ask anybody to investigate. It lays down certain doctrines as absolutely true, and, instead of asking investigation, it threatens every investigator with eternal pain. Metaphysical research is destroy-

ing what has been called Christianity, and Christians have always feared it.

This gentleman makes another mistake, and a very common one. This is his argument : Christian countries are the most intelligent ; therefore they owe that intelligence to Christianity. Then the next step is taken. Christianity, being the best, having produced these results, must have been of divine origin.

Let us see what this proves. There was a time when Egypt was the first nation in the world. Could not an Egyptian, at that time have used the same arguments that Mr. Peters uses now, to prove that the religion of Egypt was divine ? Could he not then have said : " Egypt is the most intelligent, the most civilized and the richest of all nations ; it has been made so by its religion ; its religion is, therefore, divine " ?

So there was a time when a Hindoo could have made the same argument. Certainly this argument could have been made by a Greek. It could have been repeated by a Roman. And yet Mr. Peters will not admit that the religion of Egypt was divine, or that the mythology of Greece was true, or that Jupiter was in fact a god.

Is it not evident to all that if the churches in Europe

had been institutions of learning ; if the domes of cathedrals had been observatories ; if priests had been teachers of the facts in nature, the world would have been far in advance of what it is to-day ?

Countries depend on something besides their religion for progress. Nations with a good soil can get along quite well with an exceedingly poor religion ; and no religion yet has been good enough to give wealth or happiness to human beings where the climate and soil were bad and barren.

Religion supports nobody. It has to be supported. It produces no wheat, no corn ; it ploughs no land ; it fells no forests. It is a perpetual mendicant. It lives on the labor of others, and then has the arrogance to pretend that it supports the giver.

Mr. Peters makes this exceedingly strange statement : "Every discovery in science, invention and art has been the work of Christian men. Infidels have contributed their share, but never one of them has reached the grandeur of originality."

This, I think, so far as invention is concerned, can be answered with one name—John Ericsson, one of the profoundest agnostics I ever met.

I am almost certain that Humboldt and Goethe were original. Darwin was certainly regarded as such.

I do not wish to differ unnecessarily with Mr. Peters, but I have some doubts about Morse having been the inventor of the telegraph.

Neither can I admit that Christianity abolished slavery. Many of the abolitionists in this country were infidels ; many of them were Christians. But the church itself did not stand for liberty. The Quakers, I admit, were, as a rule, on the side of freedom. But the Christians of New England persecuted these Quakers, whipped them from town to town, lacerated their naked backs, and maimed their bodies, not only, but took their lives.

Mr. Peters asks : " What name is there among the world's emancipators after which you cannot write the name ' Christian ? ' " Well, let me give him a few—Voltaire, Jefferson, Paine, Franklin, Lincoln, Darwin.

Mr. Peters asks : " Why is it that in Christian countries you find the greatest amount of physical and intellectual liberty, the greatest freedom of thought, speech, and action ? "

Is this true of all ? How about Spain and Portugal ? There is more infidelity in France than in Spain, and there is far more liberty in France than in Spain.

There is far more infidelity in England than there

was a century ago, and there is far more liberty than there was a century ago. There is far more infidelity in the United States than there was fifty years ago, and a hundred infidels to-day where there was one fifty years ago ; and there is far more intellectual liberty, far greater freedom of speech and action, than ever before.

A few years ago Italy was a Christian country to the fullest extent. Now there are a thousand times more liberty and a thousand times less religion.

Orthodoxy is dying ; Liberty is growing.

Mr. Ballou, a grandson, or grand-nephew, of Hosea Ballou, seems to have wandered from the faith. As a rule, Christians insist that when one denies the religion of Christian parents he is an exceedingly bad man, but when he denies the religion of parents not Christians, and becomes a Christian, that he is a very faithful, good and loving son.

Mr. Ballou insists that God has the same right to punish us that Nature has, or that the State has. I do not think he understands what I have said. The State ought not to punish for the sake of punishment. The State may imprison, or inflict what is called punishment, first, for its own protection, and, secondly, for the reformation of the punished. If no one could do the State any injury, certainly the

State would have no right to punish under the plea of protection ; and if no human being could by any possibility be reformed, then the excuse of reformation could not be given.

Let us apply this : If God be infinite, no one can injure him. Therefore he need not punish anybody or damn anybody or burn anybody for his protection.

Let us take another step. Punishment being justified only on two grounds—that is, the protection of society and the reformation of the punished—how can eternal punishment be justified ? In the first place, God does not punish to protect himself, and, in the second place, if the punishment is to be forever, he does not punish to reform the punished. What excuse then is left ?

Let us take still another step. If, instead of punishment, we say “consequences,” and that every good man has the right to reap the good consequences of good actions, and that every bad man must bear the consequences of bad actions, then you must say to the good : If you stop doing good you will lose the harvest. You must say to the bad : If you stop doing bad you need not increase your burdens. And if it be a fact in Nature that all must reap what they sow, there is neither mercy nor cruelty in this fact, and I

hold no God responsible for it. The trouble with the Christian creed is that God is described as the one who gives rewards and the one who inflicts eternal pain.

There is still another trouble. This God, if infinite, must have known when he created man, exactly who would be eternally damned. What right had he to create men, knowing that they were to be damned?

So much for Mr. Ballou.

The Rev. Dr. Hillier seems to reason in a kind of circle. He takes the ground, in the first place, that "infidelity, Christianity, science, and experience all agree, without the slightest tremor of uncertainty, in the inexorable law that whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." He then takes the ground that, "if we wish to be rid of the harvest, we must not sow the seed ; if we would avoid the result, we must remove the cause ; the only way to be rid of hell is to stop doing evil ; that this, and this only, is the way to abolish an eternal penitentiary."

Very good ; but that is not the point. The real thing under discussion is this : Is this life a state of probation, and if a man fails to live a good life here, will he have no opportunity for reformation in another world, if there be one ? Can he cease to do

evil in the eternal penitentiary? and if he does, can he be pardoned—can he be released?

It is admitted that man must bear the consequences of his acts. If the consequences are good, then the acts are good. If the consequences are bad, the acts are bad. Through experience we find that certain acts tend to unhappiness and others to happiness.

Now, the only question is whether we have wisdom enough to live in harmony with our conditions here; and if we fail here, will we have an opportunity of reforming in another world? If not, then the few years that we live here determine whether we shall be angels or devils forever.

It seems to me, if there be another life, that in that life men may do good, and men may do evil; and if they may do good it seems to me that they may reform.

I do not see why God, if there be one, should lose all interest in his children, simply because they leave this world and go where he is. Is it possible that an infinite God does all for his children here, in this poor ignorant world, that it is possible for him to do, and that if he fails to reform them here, nothing is left to do except to make them eternal convicts?

The Rev. Mr. Haldeman mistakes my position. I do not admit that "an infinite God, as revealed in Nature, has allowed men to grow up under conditions

which no ordinary mortal can look at in all their concentrated agony and not break his heart."

I do not confess that God reveals himself in Nature as an infinite God, without mercy. I do not admit that there is an infinite Being anywhere responsible for the agonies and tears, for the barbarities and horrors of this life. I cannot believe that there is in the universe a Being with power to prevent these things. I hold no God responsible. I attribute neither cruelty nor mercy to Nature. Nature neither weeps nor rejoices. I cannot believe that this world, as it now is, as it has been, was created by an infinitely wise, powerful, and benevolent God. But it is far better that we should all go down "with souls unsatisfied" to the dreamless grave, to the tongueless silence of the voiceless dust, than that countless millions of human souls should suffer forever.

Eternal sleep is better than eternal pain. Eternal punishment is eternal revenge, and can be inflicted only by an eternal monster.

Mr. George A. Locey endeavors to put his case in an extremely small compass, and satisfies himself with really one question, and that is : "If a man in good health is stricken with disease, is assured that a physician can cure him, but refuses to take the medicine and dies, ought there to be any escape?"

He concludes that the physician has done his duty ; that the patient was obdurate and suffered the penalty.

The application he makes is this :

“ The Christian’s ‘ tidings of great joy ’ is the message that the Great Physician tendered freely. Its acceptance is a cure certain, and a life of eternal happiness the reward. If the soul accepts, are they not tidings of great joy ; and if the soul rejects, is it not unreasonable on the part of Colonel Ingersoll to try and sneak out and throw the blame on God ? ”

The answer to this seems easy. The cases are not parallel. If an infinite God created us all, he knew exactly what we would do. If he gave us free will it does not change the result, because he knew how we would use the free will.

Now, if he knew that billions upon billions would refuse to take the remedy, and consequently would suffer eternal pain, why create them ? There would have been much less misery in the world had he left them dust.

What right has a God to make a failure ? Why should he change dust into a sentient being, knowing that that being was to be the heir of endless agony ?

If the supposed physician had created the patient

who refused to take the medicine, and had so created him that he knew he would refuse to take it, the cases might be parallel.

According to the orthodox creed, millions are to be damned who never heard of the medicine or of the "Great Physician."

There is one thing said by the Rev. Mr. Talmage that I hardly think he could have intended. Possibly there has been a misprint. It is the following paragraph :

"Who" (speaking of Jesus) "has such an eye to our need ; such a lip to kiss away our sorrow ; such a hand to snatch us out of the fire ; *such a foot to trample our enemies* ; such a heart to embrace all our necessities ?"

What does the reverend gentleman mean by "*such a foot to trample our enemies*" ?

This, to me, is a terrible line. But it is in accordance with the history of the church. In the name of its founder it has "trampled on its enemies," and beneath its cruel feet have perished the noblest of the world.

The Rev. J. Benson Hamilton, of Brooklyn, comes into this discussion with a great deal of heat and considerable fury. He states that "Infidelity is the creed of prosperity, but when sickness or trouble or

sorrow comes he " (meaning the infidel) " does not paw nor mock nor cry ' Ha! ha!' He sneaks and cringes like a whipped cur, and trembles and whines and howls."

The spirit of Mr. Hamilton is not altogether admirable. He seems to think that a man establishes the truth of his religion by being brave, or demonstrates its falsity by trembling in the presence of death.

Thousands of people have died for false religions and in honor of false gods. Their heroism did not prove the truth of the religion, but it did prove the sincerity of their convictions.

A great many murderers have been hanged who exhibited on the scaffold the utmost contempt of death; and yet this courage exhibited by dying murderers has never been appealed to in justification of murder.

The reverend gentleman tells again the story of the agonies endured by Thomas Paine when dying; tells us that he then said that he wished his work had been thrown into the fire, and that if the devil ever had any agency in any work he had in the writing of that book (meaning "The Age of Reason,") and that he frequently asked the Lord Jesus to have mercy upon him.

Of course there is not a word of truth in this story. Its falsity has been demonstrated thousands and thousands of times, and yet ministers of the Gospel go right on repeating it just the same.

So this gentleman tells us that Voltaire was accustomed to close his letters with the words, "Crush the wretch!" (meaning Christ). This is not so. He referred to superstition, to religion, not to Christ.

This gentleman also says that "Voltaire was the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating and blaspheming God; that he complained that he was abandoned by God; that when he died his friends fled from the room, declaring the sight too terrible to be endured."

There is not one word of truth in this. Everybody who has read the life of Voltaire knows that he died with the utmost serenity.

Let me tell you how Voltaire died.

He was an old man of eighty-four. He had been surrounded by the comforts of life. He was a man of wealth—of genius. Among the literary men of the world he stood first. God had allowed him to have the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery. He stood at the summit of his age. The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would for-

get, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire.

Toward the last of May, 1788, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey.

"Two days before his death his nephew went to seek the Curé of St. Sulpice and the Abbé Gautier, and brought them into his uncle's sick-chamber, who was informed that they were there.

" 'Ah, well,' said Voltaire ; ' give them my compliments and my thanks.'

"The abbé spoke some words to Voltaire, exhorting him to patience. The Curé of St. Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked Voltaire, lifting his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man pushed one of his hands against the curé's coif shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side :

" 'Let me die in peace!'

"The curé seemingly considered his person soiled and his coif dishonored by the touch of the philosopher. He made the nurse give him a little brushing and went out with the Abbé Gautier.

"He expired," says Wagniere, "on the 30th of

May, 1788, at about a quarter past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity.

"Ten minutes before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his *valet-de-chambre*, who was watching by him, pressed it and said : 'Adieu, my dear Morand. I am gone !'

"These were his last words."

From this death, so simple and serene, so natural and peaceful—from these words so utterly destitute of cant or dramatic touch—all the frightful pictures, all the despairing utterances have been drawn and made, From these materials, and from these alone, have been constructed all the shameless calumnies about the death of this great and wonderful man.

Voltaire was the intellectual autocrat of his time. From his throne at the foot of the Alps he pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. He was the pioneer of his century. He was the assassin of superstition. Through the shadows of faith and fable ; through the darkness of myth and miracle ; through the midnight of Christianity ; through the blackness of bigotry ; past cathedral and dungeon ; past rack and stake ; past altar and throne, he carried, with chivalric hands, the sacred torch of Reason.

Let me also tell you about the death of Thomas

Paine. After the publication of his "Rights of Man" and "The Age of Reason", every falsehood that malignity could coin and malice pass, was given to the world. On his return to America, although Thomas Jefferson, another infidel, was President, it was hardly safe for Paine to appear in the public streets.

Under the very flag he had helped to put in heaven, his rights were not respected. Under the Constitution that he had first suggested, his life was insecure. He had helped to give liberty to more than three millions of his fellow-citizens, and they were willing to deny it unto him.

He was deserted, ostracized, shunned, maligned and cursed. But he maintained his integrity. He stood by the convictions of his mind, and never for one moment did he hesitate or waver. He died almost alone.

The moment he died the pious commenced manufacturing horrors for his death-bed. They had his chamber filled with devils rattling chains, and these ancient falsehoods are certified to by the clergy even of the present day.

The truth is that Thomas Paine died as he had lived. Some ministers were impolite enough to visit him against his will. Several of them he ordered

from his room. A couple of Catholic priests, in all the meekness of arrogance, called that they might enjoy the agonies of the dying friend of man. Thomas Paine, rising in his bed, the few moments of expiring life fanned into flame by the breath of indignation, had the goodness to curse them both.

His physician, who seems to have been a meddling fool, just as the cold hand of Death was touching the patriot's heart, whispered in the dulled ear of the dying man : " Do you believe, or do you wish to believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ? "

And the reply was : " I have no wish to believe on that subject."

These were the last remembered words of Thomas Paine. He died as serenely as ever mortal passed away. He died in the full possession of his mind, and on the brink and edge of death proclaimed the doctrines of his life.

Every philanthropist, every believer in human liberty, every lover of the great Republic, should feel under obligation to Thomas Paine for the splendid services rendered by him in the darkest days of the American Revolution. In the midnight of Valley Forge, " The Crisis " was the first star that glittered in the wide horizon of despair.

We should remember that Thomas Paine was the

first man to write these words : " The United States of America."

The Rev. Mr. Hamilton seems to take a kind of joy in imagining what infidels will suffer when they come to die, and he writes as though he would like to be present.

For my part I hope that all the sons and daughters of men will die in peace ; that they will pass away as easily as twilight fades to night.

Of course when I said that " Christianity did not bring tidings of great joy, but a message of eternal grief," I meant orthodox Christianity ; and when I said that " Christianity fills the future with fire and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, in which most of the children of men were to be imprisoned forever," I was giving what I understood to be the Evangelical belief on that subject.

If the churches have given up the doctrine of eternal punishment, then for one I am delighted, and I shall feel that what little I have done toward that end has not been done in vain.

The Rev. Mr. Hamilton, enjoying my dying agony in imagination, says : " Let the world wait but for a few years at the most, when Death's icy fingers feel for the heartstrings of the booster, and, as most of

his like who have gone before him have done, he will sing another strain."

How shall I characterize the spirit that could prompt the writing of such a sentence ?

The reverend gentleman "loves his enemies," and yet he is filled with glee when he thinks of the agonies I shall endure when Death's icy fingers feel for the strings of my heart! Yet I have done him no harm.

He then quotes, as being applicable to me, a passage from the prophet Isaiah, commencing : " The vile person will speak villainy."

Is this passage applicable only to me ?

The Rev. Mr. Holloway is not satisfied with the "Christmas Sermon." For his benefit I repeat, in another form, what the "Christmas Sermon" contains :

If orthodox Christianity teaches that this life is a period of probation, that we settle here our eternal destiny, and that all who have heard the Gospel and who have failed to believe it are to be eternally lost, then I say that Christianity did not "bring tidings of great joy," but a Message of Eternal Grief. And if the orthodox churches are still preaching the doctrine of Endless Pain, then I say it would be far better if every church crumbled into dust than that

such preaching and such teaching should be continued.

It would be far better yet, however, if the ministers could be converted and their congregations enlightened.

I admit that the orthodox churches preach some things beside hell ; but if they do not believe in the eternity of punishment they ought publicly to change their creeds.

I admit, also, that the average minister advises his congregation to be honest and to treat all with kindness, and I admit that many of these ministers fail to follow their own advice when they make what they call " replies " to me.

Of course there are many good things about the church. To the extent that it is charitable, or rather to the extent that it causes charity, it is good. To the extent that it causes men and women to lead moral lives it is good. But to the extent that it fills the future with fear it is bad. To the extent that it convinces any human being that there is any God who not only can, but will, inflict eternal torments on his own children, it is bad.

And such teaching does tend to blight humanity. Such teaching does pollute the imagination of childhood. Such teaching does furrow the cheeks of the

best and tenderest with tears. Such teaching does rob old age of all its joy, and covers every cradle with a curse !

The Rev. Mr. Holloway seems to be extremely familiar with God. He says : " God seems to have delayed his advent through all the ages to give unto the world the fullest opportunity to do all that the human mind could suggest for the weal of the race."

According to this gentleman, God just delayed his advent for the purpose of seeing what the world would do, *knowing all the time exactly what would be done.*

Let us make a suggestion : If the orthodox creed be true, then all people became tainted or corrupted or depraved, or in some way spoiled by what is known as " Original Sin."

According to the Old Testament, these people kept getting worse and worse. It does not seem that Jehovah made any effort to improve them, but he patiently waited for about fifteen hundred years without having established any church, without having given them a Bible, and then he drowned all but eight persons.

Now, those eight persons were also depraved. The taint of Original Sin was also in their blood.

It seems to me that Jehovah made a mistake. He should also have killed the remaining eight, and started new, kept the serpent out of his garden, and furnished the first pair with a Bible and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

The Rev. Dr. Tyler takes it for granted that all charity and goodness are the children of Christianity. This is a mistake. All the virtues were in the world long before Christ came. Probably Mr. Tyler will be convinced by the words of Christ himself. He will probably remember the story of the Good Samaritan, and if he does he will see that it is exactly in point. The Good Samaritan was not a Hebrew. He was not one of "the chosen people." He was a poor, "miserable heathen," who knew nothing about the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and who had never heard of the "scheme of salvation." And yet, according to Christ, he was far more charitable than the Levites—the priests of Jehovah, the highest of "the chosen people." Is it not perfectly plain from this story that charity was in the world before Christianity was established?

A great deal has been said about asylums and hospitals, as though the Christians are entitled to great credit on that score. If Dr. Tyler will read what is said in the British Encyclopædia, under the head of

"Mental Diseases," he will find that the Egyptians treated the insane with the utmost kindness, and that they called reason back to its throne by the voice of music ; that the temples were resorted to by crowds of the insane ; and that "whatever gifts of nature or productions of art were calculated to impress the imagination were there united. Games and recreations were instituted in the temples. Groves and gardens surrounded these holy retreats. Gayly decorated boats sometimes transported patients to breathe the pure breezes of the Nile."

So in ancient Greece it is said that "from the hands of the priest the cure of the disordered mind first passed into the domain of medicine, with the philosophers. Pythagoras is said to have employed music for the cure of mental diseases. The order of the day for his disciples exhibits a profound knowledge of the relations of body and mind. The early morning was divided between gentle exercise, conversation and music. Then came conversation, followed by gymnastic exercise and a temperate diet. Afterward, a bath and supper with a sparing allowance of wine ; then reading, music and conversation concluded the day."

So "Asclepiades was celebrated for his treatment of mental disorders. He recommended that bodily

restraint should be avoided as much as possible." It is also stated that " the philosophy and arts of Greece spread to Rome, and the first special treatise on insanity is that of Celsus, which distinguishes varieties of insanity and their proper treatment."

" Over the arts and sciences of Greece and Rome the errors and ignorance of the Middle Ages gradually crept, until they enveloped them in a cloud worse than Egyptian darkness. The insane were again consigned to the miracle-working ordinances of priests or else totally neglected. Idiots and imbeciles were permitted to go clotheless and homeless. The frantic and furious were chained in lonesome dungeons and exhibited for money, like wild beasts. The monomaniacs became, according to circumstance, the objects of superstitious horror or reverence. They were regarded as possessed with demons and subjected either to priestly exorcism, or cruelly destroyed as wizards and witches. This cruel treatment of the insane continued with little or no alleviation down to the end of the last century in all the civilized countries of Europe."

Let me quote a description of these Christian asylums.

"Public asylums indeed existed in most of the metropolitan cities of Europe, but the insane were

more generally, if at all troublesome, confined in jails, where they were chained in the lowest dungeons or made the butts and menials of the most debased criminals. In public asylums the inmates were confined in cellars, isolated in cages, chained to floors or walls. These poor victims were exhibited to the public like wild beasts. They were often killed by the ignorance and brutality of their keepers."

I call particular attention to the following paragraph : " Such was the state of the insane generally throughout Europe at the commencement of this century. Such it continued to be in England so late as 1815 and in Ireland as 1817, as revealed by the inquiries of parliamentary commissions in those years respectively."

Dr. Tyler is entirely welcome to all the comfort these facts can give.

Not only were the Greeks and Romans and Egyptians far in advance of the Christians in the treatment of the mentally diseased, but even the Mohammedans were in advance of the Christians about 700 years, and in addition to this they treated their lunatics with great kindness.

The temple of Diana of Ephesus was a refuge for insolvent debtors, and the Thesium was a refuge for slaves.

Again, I say that hundreds of years before the establishment of Christianity there were in India not only hospitals and asylums for people, but even for animals. The great mistake of the Christian clergy is that they attribute all goodness to Christianity. They have always been engaged in maligning human nature—in attacking the human heart—in efforts to destroy all natural passions.

Perfect maxims for the conduct of life were uttered and repeated in India and China hundreds and hundreds of years before the Christian era. Every virtue was lauded and every vice denounced. All the good that Christianity has in it came from the human heart. Everything in that system of religion came from this world ; and in it you will find not only the goodness of man, but the imperfections of man—not only the love of man, but the malice of man.

Let me tell you why the Christians for so many centuries neglected or abused the insane. They believed the New Testament, and honestly supposed that the insane were filled with devils.

In regard to the contest between Dr. Buckley, who, as I understand it, is a doctor of theology—and I should think such theology stood in need of a doctor—and the *Telegram*, I have nothing to say. There is only one side to that contest ; and so far

as the Doctor heretofore criticised what is known as the "Christmas Sermon," I have answered him, leaving but very little to which I care to reply in his last article.

Dr. Buckley, like many others, brings forward names instead of reasons—instead of arguments. Milton, Pascal, Elizabeth Fry, John Howard, and Michael Faraday are not arguments. They are only names ; and, instead of giving the names, Dr. Buckley should give the reasons advanced by those whose names he pronounces.

Jonathan Edwards may have been a good man, but certainly his theology was infamous. So Father Mathew was a good man, but it was impossible for him to be good enough to convince Dr. Buckley of the doctrine of the "Real Presence."

Milton was a very good man, and he described God as a kind of brigadier-general, put the angels in uniform and had regular battles ; but Milton's goodness can by no possibility establish the truth of his poetical and absurd vagaries.

All the self-denial and goodness in the world do not even tend to prove the existence of the supernatural or of the miraculous. Millions and millions of the most devoted men could not, by their devotion, substantiate the inspiration of the Scriptures.

There are, however, some misstatements in Dr. Buckley's article that ought not to be passed over in silence.

The first is to the effect that I was invited to write an article for the *North American Review*, Judge Jeremiah Black to reply, and that Judge Black was improperly treated.

Now, it is true that I was invited to write an article, and did write one ; but I did not know at the time who was to reply. It is also true that Judge Black did reply, and that my article and his reply appeared in the same number of the *Review*.

Dr. Buckley alleges that the *North American Review* gave me an opportunity to review the Judge, but denied to Judge Black an opportunity to respond. This is without the slightest foundation in fact. Mr. Metcalf, who at that time was manager of the *Review*, is still living and will tell the facts. Personally I had nothing to do with it, one way or the other. I did not regard Judge Black's reply as formidable, and was not only willing that he should be heard again, but anxious that he should.

So much for that.

As to the debate, with Dr. Field and Mr. Gladstone, I leave them to say whether they were or were not fairly treated. Dr. Field, by his candor, by his fair-

ness, and by the manly spirit he exhibited won my respect and love.

Most ministers imagine that any man who differs from them is a blasphemer. This word seems to leap unconsciously from their lips. They cannot imagine that another man loves liberty as much and with as sincere devotion as they love God. They cannot imagine that another prizes liberty above all gods, even if gods exist. They cannot imagine that any mind is so that it places Justice above all persons, a mind that cannot conceive even of a God who is not bound to do justice.

If God exists, above him, in eternal calm, is the figure of Justice.

Neither can some ministers understand a man who regards Jehovah and Jupiter as substantially the same, with this exception—that he thinks far more of Jupiter, because Jupiter had at least some human feelings.

I do not understand that a man can be guilty of blasphemy who states his honest thoughts in proper language, his object being, not to torture the feelings of others, but simply to give his thought—to find and establish the truth.

Dr. Buckley makes a charge that he ought to have known to be without foundation. Speaking of my-

self, he said : " In him the laws to prevent the circulation of obscene publications through the mails have found their most vigorous opponent."

It is hardly necessary for me to say that this is untrue. The facts are that an effort was made to classify obscene literature with what the pious call " blasphemous and immoral works." A petition was forwarded to Congress to amend the law so that the literature of Freethought could not be thrown from the mails, asking that, if no separation could be made, the law should be repealed.

It was said that I had signed this petition, and I certainly should have done so had it been presented to me. The petition was absolutely proper.

A few years ago I found the petition, and discovered that while it bore my name it had never been signed by me. But for the purposes of this answer I am perfectly willing that the signature should be regarded as genuine, as there is nothing in the petition that should not have been granted.

The law as it stood was opposed by the Liberal League—but not a member of that society was in favor of the circulation of obscene literature ; but they did think that the privacy of the mails had been violated, and that it was of the utmost importance to maintain the inviolability of the postal service.

I disagreed with these people, and favored the destruction of obscene literature not only, but that it be made a criminal offence to send it through the mails. As a matter of fact I drew up resolutions to that effect that were passed. Afterward they were changed, or some others were passed, and I resigned from the League on that account.

Nothing can be more absurd than that I was, directly or indirectly, or could have been, interested in the circulation of obscene publications through the mails ; and I will pay a premium of \$1,000 a word for each and every word I ever said or wrote in favor of sending obscene publications through the mails.

I might use much stronger language. I might follow the example of Dr. Buckley himself. But I think I have said enough to satisfy all unprejudiced people that the charge is absurdly false.

Now, as to the eulogy of whiskey. It gives me a certain pleasure to read that even now, and I believe the readers of the *Telegram* would like to read it once more ; so here it is :

“ I send you some of the most wonderful whiskey that ever drove the skeleton from a feast or painted landscapes in the brain of man. It is the mingled souls of wheat and corn. In it you will find the

sunshine and the shadow that chased each other over the billowy fields ; the breath of June ; the carol of the lark ; the dews of night ; the wealth of summer and autumn's rich content, all golden with imprisoned light. Drink it and you will hear the voices of men and maidens singing the 'Harvest Home,' mingled with the laughter of children. Drink it and you will feel within your blood the star-lit dawns, the dreamy, tawny dusks of many perfect days. For forty years this liquid joy has been within the happy staves of oak, longing to touch the lips of men."

I re-quote this for the reason that Dr. Buckley, who is not very accurate, made some mistakes in his version.

Now, in order to show the depth of degradation to which I have sunk in this direction, I will confess that I also wrote a eulogy of tobacco, and here it is :

"Nearly four centuries ago Columbus, the adventurous, in the blessed island of Cuba, saw happy people with rolled leaves between their lips. Above their heads were little clouds of smoke. Their faces were serene, and in their eyes was the autumnal heaven of content. These people were kind, innocent, gentle and loving.

“ The climate of Cuba is the friendship of the earth and air, and of this climate the sacred leaves were born—the leaves that breed in the mind of him who uses them the cloudless, happy days in which they grew.

“ These leaves make friends, and celebrate with gentle rites the vows of peace. They have given consolation to the world. They are the companions of the lonely—the friends of the imprisoned, of the exile, of workers in mines, of fellers of forests, of sailors on the desolate seas. They are the givers of strength and calm to the vexed and wearied minds of those who build with thought and dream the temples of the soul.

“ They tell of hope and rest. They smooth the wrinkled brows of pain—drive fears and strange misshapen dreads from out the mind and fill the heart with rest and peace. Within their magic warp and woof some potent gracious spell imprisoned lies, that, when released by fire, doth softly steal within the fortress of the brain and bind in sleep the captured sentinels of care and grief.

“ These leaves are the friends of the fireside, and their smoke, like incense, rises from myriads of happy homes. Cuba is the smile of the sea.”

There are some people so constituted that there is

no room in the heaven of their minds for the butterflies and moths of fancy to spread their wings. Everything is taken in solemn and stupid earnest. Such men would hold Shakespeare responsible for what Falstaff said about "sack," and for Mrs. Quickly's notions of propriety.

There is an old Greek saying which is applicable here: "In the presence of human stupidity, even the gods stand helpless."

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, lacked all sense of humor. He preached a sermon on "The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes." He insisted that they were caused by the wickedness of man, and that the only way to cure them was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The man who does not carry the torch of Humor is always in danger of falling into the pit of Absurdity.

The Rev. Charles Deems, pastor of the Church of the Strangers, contributes his part to the discussion.

He took a text from John, as follows: "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

According to the orthodox creed of the Rev. Dr. Deems all have committed sin, and consequently all are of the devil. The Doctor is not a metaphysician. He does not care to play at sleight of hand with words. He stands on bed-rock, and he asserts that the devil is no Persian myth, but a personality, who works unhindered by the limitations of a physical body, and gets human personalities to aid him in his works.

According to the text, it seems that the devil was a sinner from the beginning. I suppose that must mean from his beginning, or from the beginning of things. According to Dr. Deems' creed, his God is the Creator of all things, and consequently must have been the Creator of the devil. According to the Scriptures the devil is the father of lies, and Dr. Deems' God is the father of the devil—that is to say, the grandfather of lies. This strikes me as almost "blasphemous."

The Doctor also tells us "that Jesus believed as much in the personality of the devil as in that of Herod or Pilate or John or Peter."

That I admit. There is not the slightest doubt, if the New Testament be true, that Christ believed in a personal devil—a devil with whom he had conversations ; a devil who took him to the pinnacle of the

Temple and endeavored to induce him to leap to the earth below.

Of course he believed in a personal devil. Not only so ; he believed in thousands of personal devils. He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene. He cast a legion of devils out of the man in the tombs, or, rather, made a bargain with these last-mentioned devils that they might go into a drove or herd of swine, if they would leave the man.

I not only admit that Christ believed in devils, but he believed that some devils were deaf and dumb, and so declared.

Dr. Deems is right, and I hope he will defend against all comers the integrity of the New Testament.

The Doctor, however, not satisfied exactly with what he finds in the New Testament, draws a little on his own imagination. He says :

“The devil is an organizing, imperial intellect, vindictive, sharp, shrewd, persevering, the aim of whose works is to overthrow the authority of God’s law.”

How does the Doctor know that the devil has an organizing, imperial intellect ? How does he know that he is vindictive and sharp and shrewd and persevering ?

If the devil has an "imperial intellect," why does he attempt the impossible?

Robert Burns shocked Scotland by saying of the devil, or, rather, to the devil, that he was sorry for him, and hoped he would take a thought and mend.

Dr. Deems has gone far in advance of Burns. For a clergyman he seems to be exceedingly polite. Speaking of the "Arch Enemy of God"—of that "organizing, imperial intellect who is seeking to undermine the church"—the Doctor says:

"The devil may be conceded to be sincere."

It has been said:

"An honest God is the noblest work of man," and it may now be added: A sincere devil is the noblest work of Dr. Deems.

But, with all the devil's smartness, sharpness, and shrewdness, the Doctor says that he "cannot write a book; that he cannot deliver lectures" (like myself, I suppose), "edit a newspaper" (like the editor of the *Telegram*), "or make after-dinner speeches; but he can get his servants to do these things for him."

There is one thing in the Doctor's address that I feel like correcting (I quote from the *Telegram's* report):

"Dr. Deems showed at length how the Son of God, the Christ of the Bible—not the Christ of the lecture

platform caricatures—is operating to overcome all these works.”

I take it for granted that he refers to what he supposes I have said about Christ, and, for fear that he may not have read it, I give it here :

“And let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say, once for all, that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say, once for all, that to that great and serene man I gladly pay, the tribute of my admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites, who have, in all ages, done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be. That is for the man. For the theological creation I have a different feeling.”

I have not answered each one who has attacked by name. Neither have I mentioned those who have agreed with me. But I do take this occasion to thank all, irrespective of their creeds, who have manfully advocated the right of free speech, and who have upheld the *Telegram* in the course it has taken.

I thank all who have said a kind word for me, and I also feel quite grateful to those who have failed to say unkind words. Epithets are not arguments. To abuse is not to convince. Anger is stupid and malice illogical.

And, after all that has appeared by way of reply, I still insist that orthodox Christianity did not come with "tidings of great joy," but with a message of eternal grief.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

New York, February 5, 1892.